

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 056-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: March 5, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Subject: WEEKLY UPDATE

The purpose of this LTC is to provide the Mayor and Commission with an update describing some of the areas the administration has recently been focusing on:

March 9 Special Election - In order to explain and educate Miami Beach residents on each of the seven ballot questions that will be presented at the special election on March 9, the Administration has prepared a Voter's Guide (English and Spanish) that has been mailed to all registered Miami Beach voters. In addition, we have placed several ads in all local newspapers (English and Spanish) and have worked with the Miami Herald Editorial Board on a piece they plan to run prior to the election. Finally, we plan to broadcast on Channel 20 the voter's educational forum coordinated by the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, North Beach Development Corporation and the Miami Beach Development Corporation that included members from the Charter Review Committee and Mayor David Dermer discussing each of the seven ballot questions. This broadcast will run several times throughout the weekend and leading up to the election on Tuesday.

Budget Preparations – The Office of Budget and Performance Improvement continues to work on budget preparations for the next fiscal year. An internal meeting with all City Departments took place on February 19 to discuss this year's budget preparations. In addition, a Commission Workshop has been scheduled for March 10 to begin to discuss budget issues and share additional information with the Mayor and City Commission.

Capital Improvement Projects – The Palm/Hibiscus Island Guardhouse Project has begun and includes demolition of the existing guardhouse, creation of a temporary facility, and new construction which should take approximately four months. Residents have been invited to meet with CIP staff and the contractor prior to the commencement of construction. Water main installation work is in progress on 42nd Street. Once finalized, streetscape enhancements will be installed, and the project is expected to conclude in May. In an effort to mitigate the construction impacts on residential vehicles, CIP has worked with the Parking Department to offer affected residents temporary parking permits at adjacent meters in area lots and on adjacent streets. The Pine Tree/La Gorce Median Project is substantially complete - several months ahead of the construction schedule with just some minor adjustments pending.

Miami Dade County – I attended a meeting with the County Manager and other City Managers from around the County on February 20 to discuss issues relating to the County's upcoming General Obligations Bond program that voters will vote on in November. In addition, Mayor Dermer and I met with the County Manager and representatives from the County Mayor's Office on February 27 to discuss issues involving the pending lawsuit over the overdue \$15 million payment owed to us by the County on December 1, 2003. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled to continue discussing the issue and coming to a resolution. At a separate meeting that day, I met with Cathy Jackson, the County's Audit Management Director, to review the County's study of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Organizational Development – As part of my ongoing organizational development efforts, I invited the Fire Department to join me for a brown bag lunch on March 1 to talk about issues that may be important to staff and the Department. My goal is to meet with all City Departments in this informal setting to further open the lines of communication and make sure that staff at all levels have an opportunity to share information with me that may be important to them. In addition, my executive staff met at an all day retreat on March 3 to continue our work regarding implementing various process improvements and performance measurements within the organization. We also focused on gathering information that would be relevant and helpful to share with the Mayor and Commission at your upcoming retreat.

Quality of Life Issues – Several meetings took place to continue addressing quality of life issues. The Police Chief and I met with a resident to discuss various issues affecting the 700 block of Jefferson Avenue and how to better deal with those issues. In addition, a meeting took place on March 4 with Commissioner Bower and representatives from the Miami Beach Police Department, City of Miami Police Department, Miami Dade County Police Department and various County Judges to discuss ongoing issues relating to prostitution and develop a coordinated response for dealing with the problem. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to continue discussing the issue and developing a coordinated response.

Black History Month – The City celebrated Black History Month by coordinating the following events: A video art exhibit featuring a historical perspective on the Black Rights Movement in South Florida will be shown throughout the month in the lobby of City Hall. The Mayor's Black Host Committee, in partnership with the City, hosted a reception to celebrate Black History Month on February 26 at the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens. Finally, our annual employee luncheon honoring Black History Month was held on February 27. The event included guest speakers, music, entertainment, a fashion show and delicious soul food.

Women's History Month – In Celebration of Women's History Month which takes place during March, the City of Miami Beach Commission on the Status of Women will honor and celebrate the achievements and contributions of several local women at an event scheduled for March 18. Additional details to follow shortly.

Employee Celebrations – An employee-led committee is working on our annual employee picnic scheduled for Saturday, March 27 at the North Shore Open Space Park. This year's theme is an "All-America City Birthday Celebration" and will include food, games, and the celebration of the City's 89th birthday. The event is scheduled from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and members of the community will be invited to join in the festivities when we cut a birthday cake at 4:00 p.m.

Major Events Planning (MEP) – Staff worked throughout the past several weeks to ensure that various special events held on Miami Beach were successful including Volleypalooza, a volleyball tournament held from February 21-22 and the Big Shot Volleyball tournament from February 28-29. Staff is also working with representatives from the South Beach Wine & Food Festival on this year's event which is scheduled to take place throughout the City from March 5-7 and with representatives from the Winter Music Conference and the M3 (Miami, Music, Media) summit also taking place throughout the upcoming weekend.

Film & Print - Cyclops Productions and Firefly Entertainment filmed segments and promos for season 2 of FX Network's Golden Globe nominated "Nip/Tuck" exclusively in South Beach all last week. Locations included South Point Pier, Opium Garden, Nikki Beach Club, The Hotel, Ocean Drive, the Murano, and aerial and drive-around beauty shots on Miami Beach. "America's Most Wanted" filmed portions of future segments in Miami Beach. Travel Channel has been filming throughout Miami Beach for promos for the upcoming "Beach Week." Locations include Lummus Park, Nikki Beach Club, The Ritz Carlton, The Tides and The Palms Hotel. "Bob Vila's Home Again" filmed segments of the show in a condo Vila purchased on Island Avenue. Fonovideo continues production of the "Angel Rebelde" telenovela throughout the city. Telemundo's "Prisonera" also filmed the Miami Beach sign on the Julia Tuttle Causeway. Redmoxie filmed a segment of "Ride with Funk Master Flex" at the Miami Beach home of Wyclef Jean for Spike TV.

Short-term Rentals – Staff met with local realtors to discuss the current provisions dealing with and limiting short-term rentals in residential areas. The realtors were interested in allowing more flexibility as it relates to visitors and film and print crews. The realtors we met with are expected to make recommendations for us to analyze and discuss further.

Legislative Affairs – Staff traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 1 and met with representatives from the offices of Congresswoman Ileana Ros Leitanan, Congressman Lincoln Diaz Balart, Congressman Peter Deutsch, Senator Bill Nelson and Senator Bob Graham to discuss various legislative priorities and issues, including: Law Enforcement Technology earmark, Department of the Interior earmark for Old City Hall, \$9 million stormwater sewer request for North Beach from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), extension of \$2.9 million in Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) earmark for transit facility at Alton & 5th Street, \$2 million in additional funding request earmarked for the North Shore Bandshell and the North Beach Cultural Facility (Byron Carlyle) and discussed the process involved with the National Heritage Area designation.

North Beach 71st Street Strategic Plan – Staff presented an update to the strategic plan that was the subject of a prior Commission Workshop. Additional information is being compiled to share with the Mayor and Commission at a future workshop.

Byron-Carlyle Theater – Staff and I toured the Byron-Carlyle Theater on March 5. The construction is nearing completion with the inspection process expected to begin by the end of the month.

Tourism and Cultural Development – On March 5, staff met with representatives from ERA, the City's consultant, to continue discussing the draft report prepared by ERA. The discussion focused on reviewing and assessing the Greater Miami Convention & Visitor's Bureau (GMCVB) governance, structure, processes and overall operations; making recommendations as to what type of model/structure should exist to enhance the City's tourism and convention industries; and comparing and providing a comprehensive report on GMCVB operations relative to industry standards. Details will be discussed at the next Finance Committee.

Parks and Recreation – Several special activities are being planned throughout the spring for children and families. Our next free "funday" takes place this weekend at Flamingo Park Pool. A "spring break" camp will be available from March 29 through April 2 (spring break for Miami Dade County public schools) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and will include activities, games, sports and other events. An Easter egg hunt is being planned for Saturday, April 10 at the North Shore Open Space Park.

South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – I met with Liliam Lopez and two of the Board members of the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on March 5 to discuss various issues and explore ways that the City and our various chambers of commerce can partner on future projects.

Historic Properties Database – The City's Historic Properties database is now available online. The database is a catalog of all properties located within the City's local historic districts and includes information for each property such as the year of construction, architectural style, name of architect and its contributing status.

Union Negotiations – Staff and I continued to meet with representatives from the Police, Fire and CWA Unions to further discuss the ongoing negotiations. I am pleased to report that the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) ratified their contract on March 3 and that the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) is pending ratification which will take place on March 12. Both contracts will be brought to the City Commission at your March 17 meeting. The City is continuing to collectively bargain with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and hopes to reach agreement with them in the near future.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to let me know.